

Montoliu: What is belief?

Contributed by Raphael Montoliu
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There is an almost infinite number of beliefs embraced or created by countless individuals and many cultures throughout the world. Some of these beliefs are conscious, others become part of our conditioning and lay just below conscious awareness, triggering automatic responses in us.

Some of these beliefs are religious, some are spiritual, philosophical, ideological. Even science has its beliefs, or theories … it often seeks to prove its theories rather than attempting to approach reality without bias, as it claims it does.

And what is reality? Is there an absolute truth, an objective reality? Both religion and science, that are very similar in their dogmatism, state that their world views are true, because essentially separate from human consciousness, therefore standing on their own and unassailable. One such absolute truth is “given” by God to prophets or mystics who write it down and make a religion of it, the other “discovered” by scientists in the laboratory, who translate it into a formula or theorem.

Everyone knows the riddle of the tree falling in the forest … if no one is there, does it make a sound? It produces a sound wave, which is an energy pattern, which can only become sound when a physical apparatus such as a human ear catches it and when a brain translates it into what is experienced as sound. Different creatures hear differently, and give sound different meanings according to the experiences of the species.

So what is reality? Can it exist separate from consciousness, from the physical brain and the mind that give it form and meaning? Is there anything that can actually exist apart from consciousness, standing on its own as an absolute, separate truth?

If we agree that consciousness gives form and substance to energy fields that are highly responsive to it and highly malleable, we must also remember that the chosen focuses of consciousness, at the individual as well as the mass level, are pre-determined by chosen beliefs. As we believe, so do we see, feel, experience, and create … as we believe so do we form our lives and our world. If we believe we can walk on hot coals without getting burned, we will do it. And if most of humanity believes that the world must end, the world will end.

Life, it could be said, is a series of experimentations within beliefs systems, from which our human world springs. We embrace existing beliefs or create our own belief systems and use them as long as they serve our individual evolution and the evolution of our species. We then discard them and our world changes as our beliefs change. As this is the nature of human experience, to create illusions and explore and move through them as do actors on a stage, it is quite unavoidable, because the ultimate reality, if there is such a thing and as far as our species is concerned, is a psychic field of infinite potentiality, of endless creativity.

This creativity is what distinguishes us from animals, whose behaviors are mostly pre-determined by what is called instinct, and who live in a state of grace, or harmony and balance with the creation and true to their nature, without having to strive for it.

The Biblical myths of the tree of knowledge and of the fall are meant to symbolically represent this leap in human evolution from a pre-determined life, a purely instinctive life, to a life of conscious choice and creativity, that are the gifts and responsibilities of conscious evolution.

Today, there are reactionary movements in the world, primarily rising from organized religions gone fundamentalist, but also from political ideologies, that would propose a regression towards pre-determined life, not in a natural state of grace as in the animal kingdom, but under coercion and oppression, under harsh laws that would re-establish the authoritarian state. As differences and multiplicity are erroneously perceived to be causes of conflicts, many people are progressively espousing the belief that only the eradication of such differences can lead to global peace.

Even the most progressive and open-minded among us state that, for example, “not seeing skin color” is the proper way to deal with racial differences. The Olympic slogan, “One world one dream,” resonates with these rising fantasies of the unification of the world through uniformity, and of an ultimate outcome of one world government, one world ideology, one world religion, one world culture.

Human creativity, the fulfillment of which is the very condition necessary for consciousness to evolve and even survive, can only be stifled under authoritarianism, that breed conformity and uniformity, the opposites of creativity. Coercive authority is indeed the enemy of creativity (try to force a poet to write, and see what s/he produces under such conditions … all true artists are rebels by nature … all dictatorships silence artists and intellectuals first, then burn books). If we understand that creativity is an intrinsic part of the human psyche, we can imagine what all that opposes creativity does to the human spirit, which explains the degree of violence our world is experiencing on a constant basis. The primal energy of creativity emerges, under oppressive conditions, in destructive forms, like steam under pressure, or like a grizzly bear that escapes captivity.

The enemy of creativity is also fear, that is always at the very root of all aspirations to achieve dominant power, control, and authority. Because fear is unavoidable, to live as a true human being requires great courage. Not just the courage to work, raise a family and do the right thing, but the courage to accept the greater responsibility of being a co-creator of the individual and mass realities we all experience. It requires the courage to acknowledge that consciousness is the root and the ground of the world we know.

The path to peace is not to suppress multiplicity and cause humanity to submit to inflexible dogmas and ideologies, to the unification of the world under globalization and other agendas meant to “homogenize” the world, but to acknowledge differences, and not only respect and honor them, but celebrate them … to see differences in skin

colors, in cultures, in belief systems, in languages and religions, in human behaviors, and celebrate them joyfully! To no longer perceive creativity to be a threat, by accepting the facts that there is no absolute truth, only relative truths, there is not one proper way, there are many paths, and there is no objectivity, only subjectivity. There is no reality that can remain separate from the viewer or witness, even at the sub-atomic particle level, there are only individual perceptions, and mass perceptions within species, cultures and historic periods.

The beliefs we choose to call "truths" do not originate from outside of us, they are our creations. Only by understanding this will we stop fighting to invalidate other's beliefs, or "truths," or perceptions of reality, and accept the very liberating fact that the only valid power given to us is creative power, not dominant power or coercive authority, whose foundations are fear and that consequently can only generate more fear, and oppose creativity or the very nature of human consciousness.

And all of this, of course, is part of an individual's belief system, not an ultimate truth, even the "facts" stated as such for the purpose of clarity.

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